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There can be no question that for many years he impressed himself profoundly upon the hundreds of young men who graduated from the College, and is remembered by them with reverence and love.

In person he was small, slight and frail, probably never weighing a hundred and twenty pounds when in his best condition. His countenance was refined, and delicate, and on occasion luminous with feeling; his manner was gentlemanly and courteous, but usually rather reserved until some interesting topic made him forget himself, — then he was fluent and even impetuous in conversation. He was modest almost to shyness, though certainly conscious of his own real merit and ability; pure and simple-hearted as a child, and gentle unless in the presence of some wrong or meanness, — then he could blaze with unexpected fire. He was a faithful friend, a good and patriotic citizen, and an earnest and active member and officer of the church to which he belonged, always prominent in its work and counsels.

It would of course be false to say that he was faultless, but I am sure of this, — that a purer and more blameless life than his is seldom lived, and that his name will always be reverently and affectionately remembered by those who knew him best.

JOHN LAWRENCE LE CONTE.*

DR. JOHN LAWRENCE LE CONTE belonged to a distinguished and wealthy family of Huguenot descent. For more than half a century the family Le Conte, father, son, and two surviving cousins, has been largely connected with the different branches of natural history of the United States. The late Dr. Le Conte was a prominent link of this respectable family pedigree.

John Lawrence Le Conte, the son of Mayor John Eaton Le Conte and Mary A. H. Lawrence, was born, May 13, 1825, in New York City. His mother died a few weeks after the birth of this child. When a boy, he was placed in St. Mary's College, Maryland, from which he graduated in 1842. His decided taste for natural history, for collecting insects, plants, or stones, developed very early, though he was never behindhand in his obligatory studies. According to the wishes of his father, his inclination for studies different from the regular course of the College was not repressed. "Once it happened

* I have, of course, used freely all the necrologies known to me; but I am personally indebted to the late Dr. J. L. Le Conte for a number of facts given here.

that, during the customary silence in the school-room, young Le Conte was seen suddenly starting from his seat and scrambling on the floor in the middle of the room. Called to the tutor's desk, he held in his hand two beetles, and explained that they were very rare, and that he could not help trying to catch them."

His progress in the study of languages and mathematics was thorough and rapid. After graduation he entered the College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York, and received his medical degree in 1846. He was in 1844, chemical assistant to Prof. John Torrey. During this time his predilection for the study of the Coleoptera of his country seems to have strongly developed, and henceforth he pursued this work through his whole life with an earnestness rarely equalled and never surpassed. He joined an entomological society, of which I believe Rev. F. J. Morris of Baltimore is the only survivor. The collections of his father, of Mr. S. S. Haldeman, of the Rev. Mr. Melsheimer and the Rev. Mr. Ziegler, were at his disposal, and before his graduation he published two papers containing the descriptions of some species believed to be new to science.

It is touching to observe how his father devoted himself to the care and development of his only child. About twenty years before, he had himself published some papers on Coleoptera, but later he took a greater interest in the previous stages of Lepidoptera. The well-known monograph, which he published together with Dr. Boisduval from Paris, France, was the fruit of these studies. But when the son decided upon the line of his studies, his father returned also to his former favorites, and published a monograph of the Histeridæ of the United States, for which the son had drawn some excellent plates. These plates evince a prominent talent for entomological drawing, and it is not easy to understand why he did not follow up this remarkable talent, (perhaps the plates for the monograph of *Pasimachus* are made by him,) the more so as his father was an excellent draughtsman. Mayor Le Conte was distinguished for thorough knowledge of several languages, and for his taste in fine arts and in music. So father and son studied and worked together. Once in a conversation the late Doctor spoke at some length about the works of Berosus. When I asked how it had happened that he had studied this old and rather odd author, he answered, "I have studied all such things together with my father." At this time he made his first journey to the Platte River and Fort Laramie, in 1845, after Fremont's first exploration.

A very important characteristic of his entomological publications

showed itself almost from the time when he began to work, — to be perfectly sure of the differences of the species. To obtain this aim he used dichotomical or synoptical tables, or comparative descriptions. Here, as ever afterwards, he studied as much as possible the works of other scientists, and adopted what he found available; but based his publications upon his own original studies. There exists no fairer, no better way to advance science.

It was quite natural for such an eager student to become hampered more or less seriously by the smallness of the collections within his reach, by the almost entire want of non-American insects, by the lack of sufficient literature. In his first more extensive papers he complains about these wants. But it was unknown to him, that at this time the entomological student in Europe had nowhere an advantage over the American student. Every country, with rare exceptions, was scientifically almost isolated. Only after 1849 scientific communication was opened with England, much later with Italy and America. No student of to-day can conceive the difficulties which a student had to conquer forty years ago.

For Le Conte it was decidedly fortunate that the late Dr. H. Schaum, from Berlin, Prussia, visited the United States in 1847 and 1848. Dr. Schaum, then in the prime of life, had doubtless at that time the largest knowledge of the species of Coleoptera. As nephew of Professor Germar of Halle, he had had a chance to study all the important collections in Europe. His knowledge of Micros, Pselaphidæ, and similar groups, was unsurpassed. Such a man was just what Le Conte wanted and needed, and Schaum stayed a number of weeks at his house in Philadelphia. He went with him through his whole collection, adding to it from the large collections made by himself during his journey from New Orleans to Canada, unica not excepted. I remember very well, when my friend Schaum returned to Europe, how enthusiastically he spoke about the zeal and eagerness of the gifted young student in Philadelphia. "He squeezed me dry as a lemon, and you know the extent of my knowledge of species." They became life-long friends, and their frequent correspondence was only stopped by Schaum's premature death. The impulse and advantage of this friendship is clearly to be seen in Le Conte's succeeding publications, particularly in his paper on Pselaphidæ.

The arrival of Professor L. Agassiz gave to the young student more general views, and a larger scope. He attached himself enthusiastically to the celebrated master, and formed a life-long friendship with the father, and later with the son. He accompanied Professor

Agassiz in 1849 on his exploration of Lake Superior, and published an account of the Coleoptera collected on this journey.

In the autumn of 1850 he visited California, stopping a short time at Panama, and staying in San Francisco, San José, and San Diego with Dr. C. C. Parry, who was connected with the Mexican Boundary Survey. In November he crossed the Colorado Desert, and was in February in the valley of the Gila.

In 1852, the Le Contes removed to Philadelphia. The abundant new material obtained on his journeys was directly studied. It is really marvellous to look over the large number of papers (nearly sixty) published by him in the years subsequent to his travels. Some are of great extent, as the one on Longicornia; others, called by him mostly Synopses, are shorter, but all are the result of his own most thorough study.

In 1857 Le Conte was connected for a few months with the Honduras Interoceanic Railway Survey, only to resume his interrupted scientific labor till the breaking out of the war.

In 1861, he was married to Miss Helen Grier, and after his marriage gave up the practice of medicine. Shortly after, he joined the army during the war as Lieutenant-Colonel and Medical Inspector. After the war, in 1867, he acted as geologist for the railroad survey through Kansas and New Mexico, and again in connection with his old friend, Dr. Parry.

His studies were now so far advanced, that he decided to publish a general work on the classification of the North American Coleoptera for the benefit of the increasing number of students. The first part, published in 1862, has indeed served as a basis for the study of all American students. The comparison of this work with that of Lacordaire is very interesting. Le Conte's work goes not farther than the recently published fifth volume of Lacordaire. In comparing the larger groups, the families, and the genera, it is easily understood how carefully he had studied Lacordaire's master work. But everywhere he has aimed to build up a similar work, based upon his own studies and his own convictions. This general work was followed by a new and entirely changed catalogue of the known and described species.

After such long and uninterrupted work a vacation was needed imperatively. In the autumn of 1869 he started for Europe with his family, remaining abroad until near the close of 1872, and visiting in the mean time Algiers and Egypt. As he was acknowledged in Europe as a high authority in his field, this vacation turned into more or less a working vacation. He had for the first time the chance to

see and to study extensive collections containing the insects of the whole world, and to settle many doubtful points of synonymy.

Soon after his return, he resumed his work with undaunted ardor, in connection with his pupil and friend, Dr. George H. Horn. Now began what may be called the second period of the immense work to which he had pledged his life,—the full knowledge of the Coleopterous Fauna of North America.

The first period contains his first walks in this large field. He had found indeed some good work by his predecessors; namely, by Th. Say, whose widely scattered and rare papers he collected and republished. But in general very little was finished in a manner suited to his purpose. He was obliged to go through the whole class of Coleoptera, to study everything by himself; and it has been justly said, that he presented everything in a more improved form. The work on classification and the new catalogue closed up the first period.

But during the time in which he had followed steadily his long course, a large quantity of new material had been brought to light, and nearly all new collections found their way to his laboratory. Abroad, the knowledge of Coleoptera was very much advanced, and his own views were widely enlarged. The study of the new additions necessitated a comparative study of the species known formerly. Finally, his own papers, though they had steadily advanced, needed, as he himself found, a thorough revision, in order to bring them all up to the same standard. During the first period he had published about a hundred papers, in the second period about half this number; but to these should be added the papers of Dr. Horn, and a few of the late R. Crotch (who stayed a winter in Philadelphia), as both worked on the same material, and on the same plan. It became now necessary to study the very large group of the Rhynchophora, and it has been well said by Dr. Horn, that “here Le Conte made one of the boldest strokes of his career in the isolation of that group from other Coleoptera, and by proposing a classification of them as remarkable for its novelty as it was true to nature.” The species of Rhynchophora were published in 1876.

Having completed as far as possible the studies necessary for a continuation of his work on the classification of the Coleoptera, it became obvious that the advance of science during the last twenty years demanded an entirely new work. As his health was slightly failing, he associated with himself his true and most devoted friend, Dr. Horn. The new work was to be equally divided, and was begun in January,

1882. It was completed in March, 1883. It was the last effort of a life-long study.

Since 1878 he had been appointed to the United States Mint in Philadelphia. In the spring of 1883 he made his last journey to California. His health seemed to improve, then to fail again. He died on November 15, 1883, and was buried in West Laurel Hill Cemetery in Philadelphia. His wife and two sons survive him.

Le Conte's figure, his features and countenance, reminded one strongly of his French descent. Concerning his character it is sufficient to say that he had no enemy. He was an honorary member of the prominent entomological, and many other societies, as well as a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. His publications will form a strong and enduring basis for all succeeding workers to build upon.*

His extensive collection was bequeathed by him to the Agassiz Museum in Cambridge. It will forever be one of the most valuable treasures of this institution.

GEORGE ENGELMANN.

IN the death of Dr. Engelmann, which took place on the 4th of February last, the American Academy has lost one of its very few Associate Fellows in the Botanical Section, and the science one of its most eminent and venerable cultivators.

He was born at Frankfort-on-the-Main, February 2, 1809, and had therefore just completed his seventy-fifth year. His father, a younger member of the family of Engelmanns who for several generations served as clergymen at Bacharach on the Rhine, was also educated for the ministry, and was a graduate of the University of Halle, but he devoted his life to education. Marrying the daughter of George Oswald May, a somewhat distinguished portrait-painter, they established at Frankfort, and carried on for a time with much success, a school for young ladies, such as are common in the United States, but were then a novelty in Germany.

George Engelmann was the eldest of thirteen children born of this marriage, nine of whom survived to manhood. Assisted by a scholarship founded by "the Reformed Congregation of Frankfort," he went

* Mr. S. Henshaw has published a "List of Le Conte's Entomological Writings," Cambridge, 1878, 4to; and an Index to the Coleoptera described by Le Conte, in *Trans. Amer. Entom. Soc.*, 1881, vol. ix.